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ABSTRACT

A large-scale sociological study of teacher burnout in the public schools is summarized. Data presented in the study consist of: a sample of 3,500 teachers in Houston, whose attitudes were monitored in 1977; exit interviews of every teacher in the initial sample who subsequently quit teaching over a 5-year period; achievement and attendance behavior data on over 2,200 students taught by the teachers; and a sample of teachers who remained in teaching as of 1981-82. The study sought to determine: (1) links between teacher burnout, teacher commitment, and teacher turnover; (2) how social support and social buffering variables affect the links between stress, school violence against teachers, burnout, and attitudes toward quitting teaching; and (3) how teacher burnout affects student achievement and attendance. Data revealed that teacher burnout does not lead to teacher turnover; rather, burnout is more likely to lead to teacher "entrapment" (remaining in a hated career beause of few saleable skills). Principals who support teachers and treat them as colleagues break the functional link between stress and burnout. Except for high-achieving students, the assignment of a student to a burned-out teacher did not adversely affect Iowa Test scores. (CB)

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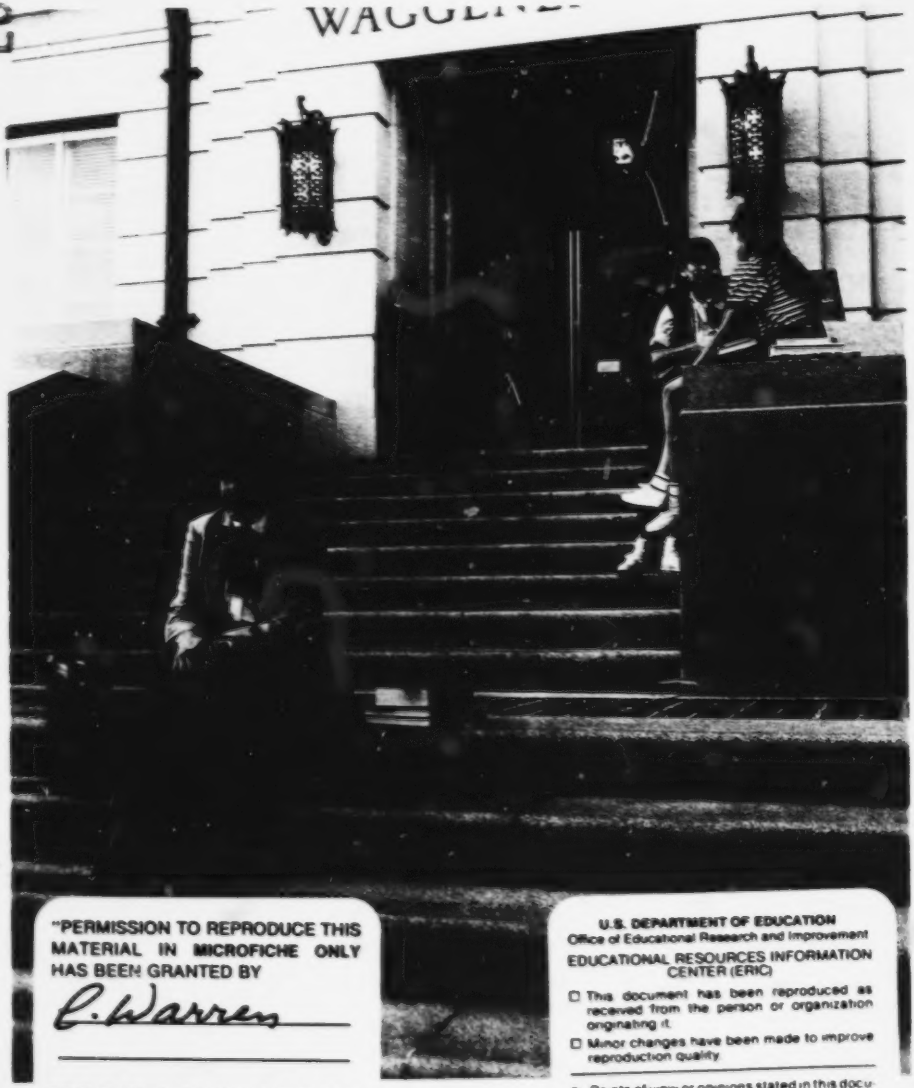

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When Teachers Give Up:
Teacher Burnout, Teacher Turnover and Their Impact on Children

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FOREWORD

The relationship between family background and academic achievement is a topic that occupied much of the attention of educators and researchers over the past twenty years. At the same time, the role of the teacher-student relationship in the educational process began to emerge as a topic of educational inquiry. More recently, the concept of job satisfaction among teachers and their ability to function optimally in the classroom in light of increasing burdens assumed a prominent place in educational leadership and literature. Dr. Anthony Gary Dworkin is a contributor to the growing body of knowledge about the changing environment of classroom teachers and their reactions to it.

The mental health implications of Dr. Dworkin's work are profound and, therefore, most appropriate for both the funding and publications programs of the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. Initially, efforts of the Foundation staff were directed to the classroom teachers of Texas through the Texas Education Agency. It was the belief of the donors and the staff of the Foundation that messages about mental hygiene would reach a larger audience of Texans if they began by talking to teachers. Similarly, because of its focus, the current Foundation staff believes the research reported in this publication has the potential to help enhance the quality of life and prevent stress-related mental health problems of a significantly large number of Texans.

A full account of Dr. Dworkin's research is being published in a 350-page monograph by the State University of New York Press in 1986. Its title is *Teacher Burnout in the Public Schools: Structural Causes and Consequences for Children.*

Adrian Rhae Fowler
Executive Associate

Ms. Fowler has been a program officer with the Hogg Foundation since 1974.

WHEN TEACHERS GIVE UP: TEACHER BURNOUT, TEACHER TURNOVER AND THEIR IMPACT ON CHILDREN

by

Anthony Gary Dworkin
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> . . . the professional working life of teachers is on the whole unacceptable.
>
> (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation At Risk*, 1983)

> WANTED. College graduate with academic major. . . . Excellent communication and leadership skills required. Challenging opportunity to serve 150 clients daily, developing up to five different products each day to meet their needs. . . . Adaptability helpful, since suppliers cannot always deliver goods and support services on time. Typical work week 47 hours. Special nature of work precludes fringe benefits such as lunch and coffee breaks, but work has many intrinsic rewards. Starting salary $12,769 with guarantee of $24,000 after only 14 years.
>
> (Darling-Hammond, Rand Corp., 1984)

Upwards to one-third of the public school teachers in urban schools are burned out. They suffer from a moderate to overwhelming sense that their work is meaningless and that they are powerless to effect changes on the job to make their work more meaningful. Such teachers believe that they are making no contribution to the betterment of their world and that nobody listens or cares.

The research reported in this booklet had three principal goals: (1) to examine the forces which produce burnout among urban public school teachers, (2) to determine the extent to which different administrative policies and behaviors have the potential of reducing burnout, and (3) to assess the impact of teacher burnout on student achievement and attendance.

The data used in the report come from research collected in the Houston public schools between 1977 and 1982. A survey of nearly 3500 teachers provided the initial assessment of burnout and some of the factors which led to burnout. Additionally, exit data were collected on every teacher from the initial sample who subsequently, over a five year period, quit teaching.

Another sample consisted of 291 teachers who were members of a local teachers' union. Data on stress, burnout, and social support were collected from the teachers in this sample. Finally, data on achievement and attendance behavior were collected on over 2200 elementary school students assigned to teachers in the initial sample, thereby permitting a test of the impact of burnout on children.

Teacher Turnover: A Continuing Problem

Teaching is a vulnerable occupation. It is characterized by higher than average rates of turnover, even higher than many occupations in which women are concentrated, including secretarial work. The turnover rates are comparable to those in such stress-laden occupations as nursing and social work.

Teacher turnover has been a persistent problem and, ironically, a frequent asset to public schools, especially in times of tight school budgets. Even in the era when there were few career opportunities open to college-educated women, the turnover rate among public school teachers exceeded that of other professionals, including professional women. Utilizing nationwide data, Mason and Bain (1959) reported an annual turnover rate for public school teachers of 17 percent. This rate represented all teachers, not just the new teachers who are most likely to quit teaching.

During the 1960s the rate increased. Charters (1970) reported on teacher turnover among a cohort of new teachers in the Oregon public schools from 1962 through 1966. By the end of the first year, more than one-third of the women and one-fifth of the men had left teaching. At the end of the second year, less than 28 percent of the females and 40 percent of the males were still left in the schools. Two general observations grew out of the work of Charters: men are more likely than women to survive in teaching and the rate at which teachers quit decreases with each successive year after the first one.

Later studies by Mark and Anderson (1977, 1978) conducted in the St. Louis schools between 1968 and 1975 confirmed many of the observations of the previous studies. However, among cohorts of teachers (in this case, groups of teachers who started teaching in the same year) from the 1970s, the likelihood of turnover was less than that among cohorts of the 1960s. That finding boded ill for school districts that were hoping to rely on attrition to offset declining enrollments or to tighten school budgets. (Replacing a teacher who quit with one who is new to teaching permits a school district to avoid higher salaries based on seniority.)

Although rates of turnover in the 1980s are somewhat lower than those during the 1950s and 1960s, there is a growing and critical shortage of teachers in all categories—especially in science, mathematics, and foreign languages as well as those certified to work with pre-primary and primary grades. Since the 1980s this society has experienced another, albeit smaller, baby boom. Likewise, expanding opportunities in alternative careers for women and minorities have made teaching a less attractive option. The consequence is that

> the current, highly educated and experienced teaching force is dwindling as older teachers retire in increasing numbers and many younger teachers leave for other occupations. Recent evidence suggests that the new recruits to teaching are less academically qualified than those who are leaving, and the number of new entrants is insufficient to meet the coming demand for teachers.
>
> (Darling-Hammond, 1984:v)

According to the National Education Association (1983:35) there is a shortfall between demand and supply of 38.5 percent.

Compounding school district problems is a growing rate of career dissatisfaction among teachers. In a survey conducted by the National Education Association in the early 1960s, 78.0 percent of the teachers indicated that, "if they had the chance to go back to college and start over again, they would choose teaching." By contrast, 46.4 percent of the teachers in the 1980s would again choose teaching (both cited in National Education Association, 1982:74, 116). Clearly today's teachers are less satisfied with their career choices than those sampled twenty years earlier.

Turnover rates reported earlier reflect national figures which combine urban, suburban, and rural schools. In most urban districts the turnover rates exceed those reported nationally for all schools. Some inner-city school districts lose up to one-half of their teaching staffs each year and upwards to 100 percent of their new teachers annually.

Generally speaking, teacher quitting behavior is selective. Charters (1970) found that age, sex, years teaching, and size of the school district affected turnover rates. In an earlier study (Dworkin, 1980), it was found that social psychological and demographic factors differentiated teachers who quit from those who do not. Younger, white teachers of middle-class origins, assigned to schools whose racial makeup differed significantly from that desired by the teachers, were several times more likely to quit than any other category of teachers.

Teacher turnover is caused by many factors. Among those most frequently cited are low salaries, problematic security and violence against teachers, oversized classes, culture shock, the growing bureaucratization of urban education, and a feeling among teachers that students, parents, school administrators, and the general public are unconcerned about teachers and schools. It is assumed that teachers become discouraged by the conditions in urban schools, lose their idealism, burn out, and then elect to leave teaching. The problems facing teachers are real.

Teacher salaries. Studies have shown that while the salaries of public school teachers have doubled between 1970 and 1980 (from $8,635 to $16,001 nationally), inflation has so eaten into a teacher's paycheck that the increase actually represents a $1468 decline in purchasing power over the decade (Ornstein, 1980).

Public confidence in public education. In a 1969 Gallup poll, 75 percent of the general public felt that teaching was a desirable career for their children. By 1980, only 48 percent of the general public felt that way (Elam and Gough, 1980). Since 1974, Gallup has also asked the public to assign grades to American public education. In that year, 48 percent gave their local schools a grade of "A" or "B." By 1982, only 37 percent gave such marks to their local schools, and 22 percent rated the nation's schools that high as an aggregate (Gallup, 1982:39). Increasingly the public as well as national and state commissions have called for competency testing of teachers (see for example the 1983 report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education entitled *A Nation at Risk*).

Student discipline and school violence. In 1976 and 1977 the National Institute of Education conducted a study of the safety of America's schools. The study revealed that 40 percent of the robberies and 36 percent of the assaults which are experienced by teenagers occur on school grounds. Of these, 42 percent result in injuries. It is in the nation's urban school that the risk of attack and robbery are the greatest. The report also indicated that "the proportions of public secondary teachers victimized by theft, attack, and robbery are roughly similar to those of students" (1978:3). The report estimated that approximately 130,000 of the nation's teachers are victimized by robbery or theft each month, and 5,200 are attacked each month.

Culture shock. Teacher colleges rarely prepare their white, middle-class majors for work in inner-city schools. Haskins (1969) and Clark (1965) found that inner-city school teachers rarely interacted with one another, thereby exaggerating their overall sense of isolation. Ogbu (1974) noted that when middle-class, white teachers made extra efforts to help minority students, they were shown no appreciation by either the children or their parents. In fact, the parents were prone to comment that the teachers were being paid well enough for their work. The parents felt that the teachers should expect nothing else.

Desegregation. Faculty desegregation has tended to be more successful and complete than has student desegregation. Schools are likely to have a balance of majority and minority faculty, but heavy concentrations of students of one race. Further, because busing of minority students to majority schools is more common than the reverse, minority schools tend to be overwhelmingly one-race schools (with minority enrollments representing 90 percent or more of the student body). Majority schools, on the other hand, tend to have only a slight plurality of majority students (Center for National Policy Review and National Institute of Education, 1977a, 1977b).

New teachers who are white are more likely to experience racial isolation than are new teachers who are black or brown. Such isolation is likely to accelerate turnover and helps to account for previous findings (Dworkin, 1980) that majority teachers are twice as likely to quit teaching as minority teachers are. This research also reported a growing difference in social class between teachers and their students in urban schools with teachers, regardless of race, coming from predominantly middle-class backgrounds, while their students come from predominantly working and lower-class backgrounds. The likelihood that middle-class teachers will experience culture shock is further increased by this demographic reality.

Teacher Alienation and Stress

Since Freudenberger (1974) first coined the term to describe persons in the helping professions who "wear out," burnout has received much attention in the psychological and management literature and especially in the popular press. Some investigators such as Maslach (1982) and Cherniss (1980) have decried the proliferation of uses of the concept. In fact, a few years ago, *Time* magazine, in an editorial, proclaimed that there now exists the "burnout of almost everybody" (Morrow, 1981:84). The concept is applied so broadly that it is used to account for any deviation from satisfaction, enthusiasm, idealism, and ebullience on the part of anybody. Maslach (1982) noted the concept has at least fifteen different meanings in the psychological literature.

Several central elements are common to most of the studies of burnout. It is generally accepted that burnout is a by-product of stress and is linked to many biophysical forces in people. The sources of stress are many, but each can be traced to factors which bear a strong resemblance to the sociological concept of alienation.

Burnout involves a feeling that one's work is meaningless—that no matter what one does on the job, it is not going to make a real difference for the school or the children or even give one a sense of accomplishment. Burnout involves a feeling that one is powerless to produce the necessary changes to make one's work more meaningful, that the school bureaucracy is too big and too powerful to permit individual teachers to change conditions in order to improve life in the classroom. Burnout means that one feels alone and isolated, that nobody cares about the teacher as an individual.

Finally, burnout involves a belief that the school rules and/or professional norms associated with the teaching role are either inoperative or that even if following the rules, one is still likely to lose. In essence then burnout, as used in the study reported in this booklet, can be viewed as a role-specific form of alienation, made up of these feelings of meaninglessness, powerlessness, isolation, and normlessness.

Meaninglessness and powerlessness were among the most crucial aspects of burnout in the study. Teacher burnout occurs because of two basic contradictions between teacher socialization and urban education. Effective teaching, as presented in colleges of education, involves two central issues: the development within the student teacher of an ideology that defines as essential the shaping and training of young minds and a methodology (pedagogy) by which such teaching goals can be attained. The achievement of teaching goals is contingent upon two conditions: that there are enough eager students and a sufficient degree of control over the interaction setting to educate the students.

Overcrowded, understaffed urban schools with hostile students, combined with a complex bureaucracy which separates policy formation from policy implementation, significantly compromise a teacher's capacity to perform effectively. When students in a classroom are functioning at widely diverse grade levels, the teacher's capacity to exert control over the educative process is compromised. When students challenge the authority of teachers, in

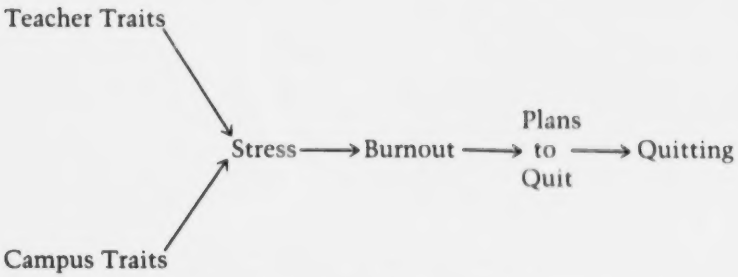
and out of the classroom, the control over the methodology of teaching is likewise weakened.

Centralized policies which determine textbooks, course content, and even the style by which information is delivered also reduce the control held by teachers. Faculty desegregation mandates allow teachers little control over building assignments and transfers. With the emphasis by government and the public for greater accountability of public schools has come a geometric increase in the amount of paperwork which a teacher must complete each day.

Finally, in urban schools, teachers are often overwhelmed by the need to interact with as many as 1000 students, parents, colleagues, and superiors per day, each of whom has different problems and makes different demands. The teacher is asked to make quick, personalistic responses to many of the individuals who may have unpredictable problems. However, because many of the interactions have implications for school policy—and even new policy formation—teachers are rarely permitted to make the required "command decisions" called for by the circumstances. Rather, decisions must work their way down the hierarchy, while the teacher is blamed by the client (student or parent) for being uncaring, inept, or unwilling to address issues. Such is the stress-laden environment of the urban public school.

Teacher Burnout and Teacher Turnover

The theory tested in this research stated that the stresses in urban public schools differ across distinct groups of teachers and schools. Thus, the characteristics of the teachers, colleagues, students, and principals, as well as the nature of the school to which the teacher is assigned, all play a role in determining stress levels and the likelihood that stress will lead to burnout. Moreover, burnout leads to the conclusion by teachers that they want to leave teaching, as well as to the motivation actually to quit. A composite of the models which governed the research is presented in the following diagram.



The study revealed that teacher burnout is common in urban public schools. Nearly one-third of the teachers in the sample reported a sense that their work was meaningless and that they were powerless to improve conditions—that is, they felt burned-out. Specifically, the report indicated that burnout was more common among teachers who:

(1) Were under 30 years of age;

(2) Were white and from middle-class backgrounds;

(3) Were inexperienced, having taught less than five years;

(4) Were racially isolated, teaching in schools where most of the student body is of another race than their own;

(5) Felt that members of their own race have been targets of discrimination at their school;

(6) Preferred not to be assigned to the school at which they teach;

(7) Believed that fate or luck controls their destinies and, hence, their future is out of their hands; and

(8) Disagreed with their principals on the appropriate role for a campus administrator.

The research revealed that the best single predictor of the likelihood that a teacher would plan to quit teaching was a sense of burnout. Teachers who wanted to quit also fit the characteristics of the teachers who were burned-out. However, there were additional characteristics. Teachers who planned to quit were also drawn from families with higher social class origins than teachers who did not

want to quit. They also had substantially larger sources of alternative income (from spouses or others) than did teachers who did not want to quit.

Finally, they were in teaching specializations such as science, math, foreign languages, and business which were in demand by employers outside the educational system. In fact, in previous analysis (Dworkin, 1982), it was found that among teachers who had specializations valued by industry, 74 percent who wanted to quit teaching left to enter jobs elsewhere; but among those without valued skills, only 8 percent quit teaching to work in non-teaching jobs.

One surprising discovery was that, while burnout explains the plans to quit teaching, neither burnout nor the desire to quit adequately explains actual quitting. In fact, quitting behavior is better explained by realistic alternatives than attitudes about the job. Minority teachers, teachers with many years of teaching experience, teachers with higher salaries, teachers who had few sources of outside income or possibilities of desirable employment were least likely to quit even if they wanted to do so. In fact, only a small percentage of the teachers who quit teaching actually did so for reasons associated with their desire to quit or feelings of burnout. *Most of the teachers who were unhappy with their jobs, felt burned-out, and wanted to quit teaching did not quit. Rather, they remained trapped in a disliked job, often for an entire career.*

Urban school districts in Texas spend millions of dollars each year with a variety of plans intended to reduce teacher turnover. Yet the teacher turnover rates in schools are less than one-half of the teacher entrapment rates. Some teachers do leave because they are dissatisfied. More often, they leave because of better opportunities elsewhere or because teaching was never meant to be a lifetime career or for personal reasons associated with their families. Most teachers who do not want to stay in teaching are unable to leave in part because they have skills which were valued only in schools, not in industry.

School districts and colleges of education must come to appreciate the problem of teacher entrapment. After all, people do not quit jobs merely because they are dissatisfied. They quit only when the prospect of some other job is present. Most teachers would prefer to remain in a hated job than collect unemployment compensation.

Reducing Teacher Burnout: The Role of the Principal

While teacher turnover is a problem for school districts, burnout and entrapment are problems for individual school employees. In fact, the number of teachers affected by burnout far exceeds the number of teachers who annually quit school districts. What can be done to reduce burnout and entrapment? The essential link between stress and burnout has been established for many years. The psychological aspects of burnout—including feelings of exhaustion, depersonalization, and meaninglessness of work—stem from the frequency and intensity of interactions in a teaching setting and especially from the joint presence of role ambiguity and role conflict. When inconsistent role expectations are presented to individuals and when there is a lack of clear-cut and consistent information regarding the rights, duties, and responsibilities of the role incumbent, then the role and its performance are stress laden.

Prolonged stress not only leads to role alienation and burnout, it also leads to illness behavior. Medical sociologists have examined the role of stress as an intervening variable in a causal chain between environmental factors (called stressors) and the onset of disease. Stress has been implicated in a variety of pathological processes, from heart disease and ulcers to anxiety and sleeplessness. Stress and its physical manifestations have often been found to be higher among workers who were not given reinforcement by their supervisors (see Jenkins, 1971; Sales and House, 1971; and Kaplan, 1983). In its review of the desegregation literature, the National Institute of Education (1976) indicated that urban schools are often characterized by little interaction among teachers and little support or collegiality on the part of principals.

In order to analyze the linkages between stress, burnout, illness, and the social support of school principals, a new sample was drawn consisting of 291 teachers from a local teachers' union. A scale was developed of role-specific stressors for teachers, and respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which each was seen as stressful. In general, stress was lowest for situations involving interactions with other teachers and in the performance of the instructional roles. By contrast, the highest level of stress was associated with student discipline (especially outside of the classroom), teaching load, interaction with administrators, and salary and benefit issues. The reported levels of stress differed by race and

sex of teacher and grade level taught but not by the race of the student body. Specifically, it was found that:

(1) Male teachers reported less stress than did female teachers;

(2) Black teachers were less stressed than were brown teachers, who were less stressed than were white teachers.

(3) Grade level made a difference, with teaching in elementary school associated with the highest level of stress, especially with regard to issues of student discipline.

One additional linkage was found with stress—that of victimization. The Safe School Study of the National Institute of Education (1978) had reported dramatic levels of theft, robbery, and muggings of teachers in the nation's schools. In the Houston schools such levels of victimization were significantly lower than the national average. However, teachers did report being victimized by students. They reported money and possessions stolen, being sworn at, being threatened with physical harm, having their cars vandalized, and actually being assaulted.

Again, white teachers reported higher rates of victimization than did brown teachers, who reported higher rates of victimization than did black teachers. Male teachers reported more instances of threats of physical violence and vandalism to their cars than did female teachers, but no sex difference existed in terms of reported actual physical harm or in theft of money or possessions. Middle school teachers were more likely to report being threatened or actually assaulted than were elementary and senior high school teachers. Finally, the race of the student body made a difference in two kinds of victimizations. Teachers in predominantly Mexican-American schools more often experienced minor assaults and vandalism to their automobiles than did teachers in black, white, or racially balanced schools.

If stress is created by social interaction, then stress can also be reduced by social mechanisms. Much research has demonstrated that among the various individuals with whom a teacher interacts during the school day, the principal is the most influential and can have the greatest impact on the teacher's job attitudes. The study reported here included questionnaire items which assessed the extent to which teachers saw their principals as supportive, con-

cerned about their welfare, and collegial. Additionally, the questionnaire examined the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness and influence of their principals in dealing with higher levels of administration. Presumably, a principal who is seen as effective would be able to make the necessary changes in the teachers' environment to reduce stress and burnout.

Four types of principals were defined in the analysis of the data:

(1) Principals seen by the teachers as not supportive and not influential;

(2) Principals seen by the teachers as supportive, but not influential;

(3) Principals seen by the teachers as not supportive, but influential; and

(4) Principals seen by the teachers as supportive and influential.

Did levels of stress, burnout, and the desire to quit teaching differ among teachers working for each of these categories of principals? The answer was clear.

Stress levels did not vary across types of principals. Evidently the variety of stresses associated with the classroom and confrontations with students was unaffected by the supportiveness of the principal.

However, the consequences of such stress differed considerably. *Teachers who were assigned to work for principals who were seen as supportive were significantly less likely to report burnout or desire to quit teaching than were teachers assigned to principals who were unsupportive. This was true regardless of how influential in producing changes in the school the principals were thought to be.*

Earlier a model of the linkage between stress, burnout, plans to quit teaching, and actual quitting was presented. What role does a supportive principal play in this linkage? Detailed analysis of the data made it possible to determine the relative effects of teacher and building variables, victimization, and stress upon burnout and the teachers' plans to quit teaching under conditions of assignment to supportive and unsupportive principals. When teachers were assigned to unsupportive principals all aspects of the model were valid. Stress led to burnout and burnout led to the desire to quit

teaching. This did not describe the situation for teachers working under supportive principals, however. Stress did not lead to burnout at all. Burnout and plans to quit teaching were a product of other factors such as victimization, the teachers' own personalities and background characteristics of the teachers (race, sex, etc.). In short, while stress levels were equal for teachers assigned to each category of principal, a supportive principal broke the functional linkage between stress and burnout, and stress and the desire to quit teaching. *With a supportive principal a teacher is much better able to endure the stresses that are associated with the teaching role.*

There is an implication in the findings reported above. A supportive principal, even if he or she is incapable of improving many of the school problems which plague teachers, breaks the link between stress and burnout by treating teachers as respected colleagues. By showing that one's teachers are valued and their opinions are respected, the principal conveys to the teachers that their work is not meaningless (a central element in burnout). In so doing, the principal returns to the teacher a sense of efficacy and rekindles the idealism fostered in teachers colleges. By collegial support, the principal states that "Even if the students are not as committed to their education as you might have been led to believe in teachers college, I am committed to education and my teachers. Even if others don't care, I care."

The Cost of Teacher Burnout to Children

There is a persistent belief in American education that teacher commitment and enthusiasm are essential for effective schools. The National Commission on Excellence in Education in its report, *A Nation at Risk* (1983), cited teacher turnover and the lack of teacher commitment to quality education as part of the current crisis in education. There is no question that teachers make a difference, but is it a difference that merits the diversion of millions of educational dollars away from curricular materials and toward buying teacher enthusiasm?

To offer a partial answer to that question a computer match-up was made between data on over 500 of the elementary school teachers in the sample and almost 2300 of their students. The goal of this match-up was to determine the effects of teacher burnout, plans to quit, and actual quitting behavior on student achievement and attendance in elementary grades 4 through 6.

Previous research suggested that these grades would provide an optimal test: the children had been in school enough years that school and home effects could be differentiated and, unlike junior and senior high school students, these children are taught by only one teacher each year. Consequently, the effects of a single teacher could be isolated. However, the findings reported here should be generalized only to elementary school settings. The study reported in this pamphlet did not address the impact of teacher burnout on junior and senior high school students; neither did it assess the compounding of impacts upon children who might be assigned to burned-out teachers year after year after year.

With only a few exceptions teacher burnout played no significant role in student achievement and student attendance. The relative uniformity of lesson plans and the centralization and/or coordination of instructional materials tended to insure that burnout had a minimal effect. Only one category of children was adversely affected by teacher burnout: bright children who scored at least one standard deviation above their age peers during the previous academic year on the standardized achievement tests (Iowa Test of Basic Skills).

Bright children need intellectual challenge and stimulation. A burned-out teacher is unable or unwilling to offer that necessary extra effort to go beyond the lesson plans. *Assignment to a burned-out teacher meant that bright children attained nearly two months less in academic achievement per year on the standardized tests than equally talented children assigned to teachers who were not burned-out.* However, since burnout is a matter of degree, the drop in gain scores was greater than two months per year for students assigned to teachers who were very burned-out than for children assigned to teachers who were less burned-out.

As has been found in numerous previous studies, however, prior achievement and student abilities better explained achievement test scores than did any clustering of school and teacher variables. Minority students gained at a lower rate per year than did majority

children. Children from higher socioeconomic groups gained more per year than did children from lower socioeconomic groups. Children who were infrequently absent from school did better on standardized tests than did children who were frequently absent, thereby demonstrating that schools do have some notable effects.

The research also found that:

(1) Achievement gains were lower for children assigned to teachers who felt that they personally could not control their own destinies than for children assigned to teachers with a strong sense of personal efficacy;

(2) Children did not achieve as much when assigned to teachers who felt that they were targets of discrimination compared to those who had no such feelings;

(3) Greater teacher experience, as assessed by years in the classroom, was associated with increased academic gains only through the fifth year of teaching. Beyond the fifth year of teacher experience student achievement gains declined slowly;

(4) Teachers who liked the racial composition of their schools produced higher achievement gain scores than did teachers who did not like the racial composition;

(5) Schools which had high teacher turnover rates produced lower levels of achievement than did schools with little teacher turnover;

(6) Individual teachers who later quit teaching and entered other jobs produced higher levels of achievement in their students than teachers who never quit. (Perhaps the capacity to find employment in industry reflected greater communication skills and a better grasp of the subject matter, which in turn was passed on to the children);

(7) The race and sex of the teacher played no role in the learning outcomes of the children. Minority teachers did no better or

worse in teaching minority children than did majority teachers, and majority teachers did no better or worse in teaching majority children than did minority teachers;

(8) No combination of teachers' race and sex and students' race and sex made a single bit of difference;

(9) Finally, what was found for the impacts on student achievement also applied to the effects on student attendance.

Using another statistical technique, it was possible to determine the relative effects of student, teacher, and school in-puts upon student achievement. While student characteristics and abilities were very powerful factors in achievement, they actually were so intermixed with teacher and school factors that previous research had overestimated the central role of student abilities in explaining present achievement levels. This is not to disclaim their significance. Student background and abilities are very powerful determinants of present student performance. However, the mixing of student, teacher, and school variables is so thorough in the experiences of urban school children than no factor is indispensable; no educational policy can concentrate on only one factor, even if burnout per se plays only a role in the educational attainment of one group of children.

Conclusions and Implications

Three general conclusions can be drawn from the research:

(1) Teacher entrapment and burnout are much more prevalent in urban public schools than is teacher turnover, despite the fact that schools have emphasized turnover as their chief personnel problem;

(2) Supportive school principals can do much to break the functional link between stress and burnout, and hence entrapment;

(3) Burnout per se has a negligible effect upon student learning outcomes, except when bright students are involved.

Since burnout plays such a small role in teacher turnover and in the achievement of most children, should attempts by school districts to attack the problem be considered a fiscal extravagance? The answer ought to be "no." First, a school system cannot afford to ignore the needs of its most capable students. From merely a pragmatic standpoint, this is true when one realizes that voters, who must approve school bonds and school tax policies, have come to rely upon scores on standardized achievement tests as the key measure of the effectiveness of the public schools. Second, the small role that burnout plays in teacher turnover reflects a warning issued by numerous national reports. Teaching is generally attracting two kinds of individuals: some who have a deep commitment to children and many who cannot compete effectively in college or in other job markets. The latter are unable to leave teaching even if they are very dissatisfied with their jobs. *If burnout plays such a small role it is because the quality of American education is so poor that the "product" is relatively unaffected by the quality of "workmanship."*

There are solutions, as suggested by such national reports as those issued by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) and by Rand Corporaton (Darling-Hammond, 1984). These reports call for changes in the recruitment and training of future teachers and professionalization of teaching, including an upgrading of teacher salaries and an increase in classroom autonomy for teachers. The research reported in this booklet urges colleges of education and school districts to make four major policy changes designed to reduce burnout and entrapment.

(1) The nature of teacher education must be altered to provide future teachers with saleable skills should they discover that teaching is not what they really want to do. Future teachers should not have education majors and substantive academic minors. Future teachers should have academic majors which correspond to their general fields of interest—such as developmental psychology for those in elementary education or history, music, physics, chemistry, etc. for those in high school. Thus, should a teacher discover that teaching is no longer what it was thought or hoped to be, a liberal arts B.A. degree will have provided the individual with those minimal skills than can be translated into entry level employment in another economic sector. This may initially exaggerate the

turnover rate because dissatisfied teachers will be able to quit to enter another career ladder. However, in the long run, it will increase the likelihood that those who remain in teaching are there by choice, not because they are trapped.

(2) At the individual school level, principals must be provided with more adequate management training—the kind that corporate managers have been offered in an effort to increase employee satisfaction and productivity. Autocratic management styles of campus administrators are clearly not conducive to staff morale. School districts should not only require sound administrative skills and styles of their principals but reward principals who have lower campus burnout and turnover rates, while penalizing those who have excessive rates.

(3) Since high scoring children are likely to be most adversely affected by burned out teachers, it is imperative that classes for gifted and talented children be staffed by teachers who retain their enthusiasm. However, enthusiasm and idealism are hardly substitutes for teaching competence, including an adequate knowledge of one's subject matter.

(4) Earlier it was noted that students performed better on standardized tests when assigned to teachers who later quit teaching and entered other job markets. Teachers who want to quit and are able to gain employment in industry may have better communication and quantitative skills than those teachers who want to quit but cannot find other work. National surveys report that colleges of education draw students who score significantly lower on standardized college entrance examinations, including the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), than do students entering other academic programs (Ornstein, 1981; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; and Darling-Hammond, 1984). Such surveys also report that the highest turnover rates are found among teachers who were high scorers on the college entrance examinations.

As long as teacher salaries are not competitive it is unlikely that the best and brightest will be attracted to teaching, given the expanded career opportunities now available to women and minorities—the pool from which most teachers have traditionally come. If school districts recruited highly competent teaching staffs, paid them well, and treated them with respect, then teacher morale would remain high. With morale high, teachers who have translat-

able skills would likely remain in teaching. Perhaps it is only when the best and the brightest are attracted into teaching that individual teacher attitudes—including burnout—will begin to have an effect on the performances of a majority of children.

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